TWO FAIR FRIENDS.

BY ELIZA F. POLLARD,

Author of "Robert Aske," "Avice," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

"A TERRIBLE AFFLICTION."

"It's to be devoutly hoped the Lord will be pleased to take her, poor mite," said Susan, the rectory cook, wiping her eyes with her apron, as she lifted the corner of a white woollen shawl, the better to inspect the very small specimen of humanity which lay thus enveloped on the lap of the village nurse.

"Yes, it seems as how it would be better for her to go, too," answered the nurse, gently swaying herself to and fro. "She's a poor little body, come afore her time, and with no mother to care for her. Was the burying very fine?"

"All the village turned out," answered Susan, proudly. "Ah, the mistress was thought a mighty deal of. Whatever we shall do without her, I don't know. The master's a cold man, always in his books. She waited on him hand and foot, and did all the work of the parish besides—mothers' meetings, clubs, schools. And they were so fond of each other. You see, they'd only been married just one year, and it was quite pretty to see how pleased she was at the coming of this baby. How she worked for it! And it's just cost her her life. Yes, it's a terrible affliction."

"And to think as how the Vicar's never yet asked to see the child," said Nurse Hobbs.

"I heard the doctor telling him it couldn't live," said Susan.

"Doctors don't always say true," answered Nurse. "It may, or it may not. I'm inclined to think it will."

Noiselessly the door opened, and a tall, thin man, in a clergyman's dress, entered. He was Cecil Irving, the Vicar of Porton, a large rural parish in Wiltshire. No marvel if he looked stern and sorrowful, for that morning he had followed his young wife to her last resting-place, and his heart was very sore within him; but as he entered the nursery and heard the nurse's last words, his features relaxed. He came quickly up to where she sat, and when she would have risen, said gently—

"Don't disturb her; don't move, Nurse. Do you really think she will live?"

"Why not, sir? I've seen many more unlikely infants thrive and grow up strong and healthy."

"Give me my daughter," said the Vicar.

The nurse obeyed,

"The Vicar carried the child to the window." p. 98.

and laid the white bundle in the arms he held out to receive it.

Then the Vicar turned away, and carried the child to the window. The spring sunshine was pouring into the room, even as it was shining on a new-made grave in the churchyard yonder. Truly, it was a life for a life. The women watching him saw Cecil Irving uncover the small face, and look long and earnestly into it, seeking doubtless for some likeness to his lost love. This morsel of humanity was all that was left to him. Verily, as Susan said, it was a terrible affliction. He was such a young man still, and life seemed so long to him in his loneliness.

A groan of anguish escaped him, and two heavy tears fell on the child's brow. "Miriam Marah" he had bidden them call her, in his despair.

After some minutes' struggle, striving to master his emotion, he came back to the two women. Yet, when the nurse prepared to take the child, he appeared not to notice the action, but looking full at her, said, in his deep, serious voice—

"Nurse Hobbs, would you undertake to bring up my daughter?"

"Lor, sir, do you mean always to bide by her?"

"Yes, that's what I mean," said the Vicar; and he looked down upon the child, who was lying quite still, awake in his arms, her eyes wide open, fixed on his face, as if she had been listening.

"I understood as how Miss Irving was to have charge of her, sir," said Nurse Hobbs.

"Yes, they settled it should be so," answered the Vicar, dreamily; "but I had not seen my little girl then, nor thought about her, except as the cause—" Here he checked himself. "I could not keep her unless I had a responsible person, like yourself, to see after her. I know nothing about babies."

"Not likely as you should, sir," answered Nurse, whilst Susan turned away and wiped her eyes.

"Well, Nurse?" said Mr. Irving.

"I'm a-thinking it will be difficult, sir. I shall have to give up my business—and there ain't no other nurse in the village but me—and my daughter a widdy with four young 'uns, and reckons upon me to help her. I make a tidy sum as matters stand now."

"You can name your own price," said the Vicar, sharply. "I do not wish you to be a loser in any way. But I know you're a good woman, and have been a careful mother yourself; and, unless you will take charge of my poor motherless babe, I must let my sister Martha have her."

"Don't let that be, Nurse," said Susan, whose greatest fear was lest Miss Irving should, now the young mistress was gone, take the reins of government at the Vicarage.

"I couldn't have it on my conscience to part you from the child, sir, now you have taken notice of her," said the nurse. "If you'll manage matters down in the village, and my daughter be willing, I'll stop and do my best for the poor mite. If anybody can bring her round, I reckon it's Nurse Hobbs; though I won't hide it from you, sir, she's as likely as not to go off at any moment—there ain't much life in her."

"I suppose not," said Mr. Irving, "but try and keep what little there is, Nurse; it's all that is left me," and placing the child in her arms, he hastily left the room.

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"I never heard of anything so foolish—to give a young infant like that over to the care of servants, when your own mother and sister are willing to take charge of her!" said Mrs. Irving to her son.

"I do not wish to be separated from the child," answered the Vicar. "If you take her I shall see her at most three or four times a year—Wiltshire is a long way from Yorkshire—and she would grow up not only motherless, but fatherless. I do not think *she* would have wished it."

"Then let Martha remain with you to superintend your household," said his mother.

The Vicar visibly winced. Sister Martha was more than ten years his senior, and had ruled his boyhood with a rod of iron; he did not feel he could ever bear to succumb to her sway again.

"Thank you," he answered. "It is very good of you and of Martha to propose anything so inconvenient to yourselves, but I feel that for the present at least I am better alone; and as for the child, Nurse Hobbs is such an experienced woman, she could not be in better hands. It is very doubtful whether she will live. I would rather, if she does go, that she should be laid beside her mother."

"Well, Cecil, you always were obstinate, and of course you must have your own way," said Mrs. Irving.

"Cecil knows I would have done my best for both him and the child," said Martha, with an aggrieved air.

"Of course I do, Martha," answered her brother; "but, as I said just now, for the present I would rather be alone."

"Please yourself," replied Martha. She was a large woman, about forty years of age, hard-featured, with sandy-coloured hair, and cold steel-grey eyes. "In that case, mother," she continued, "the sooner we get home the better; and as we can be of no further use to Cecil, it would be as well if we went up to London to-night, and back to Yorkshire to-morrow. If I had had the charge of the baby, I should have remained here till it was strong enough to bear the journey," and she looked at her brother to see if there were any sign of relenting; but his face was stoically immovable.

To have been mistress at the Vicarage, with a child to bring up, would have suited Martha's domineering nature; she was the eldest daughter, but old Mrs. Irving still kept the reins of government in her own hands at home, and the two younger sisters also asserted their rights. When Cecil took orders, and immediately after his ordination obtained through his college friend Lord Hurst the gift of the living of Porton, she had elected to go and keep house for him. Great was her disappointment when he announced his engagement to Miriam Aveline, an orphan ward of his college tutor, the Rev. John Moran. The marriage took place immediately, and Cecil went with his young bride home. That was just a year ago, and now her place knew her no more; and Cecil Irving meant to keep it vacant—he wanted no one to fill her "empty chair." He was a man of deep, concentrated affection, not easily given to change; and knowing such to be the case, Martha and his mother felt that what he had said he would abide by.

"Then we had better pack our things," said Mrs. Irving, "and leave by the five o'clock train. I hope you may not regret your decision, Cecil."

"I hope not, mother," he answered, lifting his head. "Jim will drive you down to the station."

"Thank you," answered his mother, and she and Martha left the room together.

A few hours afterwards, Mr. Irving was detailing this conversation to his friend Mr. Moran.

"My dear fellow, I'm glad you have had the courage to act as you say," said he, laying his hand on the young Vicar's shoulder.

"You approve, then?" he asked, wearily.

"I should rather think so! She'll be a comfort to you, as my Gilbert has been to me since my wife died. Children are sent to comfort us, and we have no right to put them away from us; they are God's gifts."

"It seems a very little gift to compensate for a great loss," said Cecil, sadly.

"Yes, I know it does," returned Mr. Moran. "Still, remember, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'"

CHAPTER II.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

"THERE go the Vicar and Miriam! Well, it always gives me a shock when I see that mite of a child riding beside her father. What a baby it is still!" said Miss Nunn, the village doctor's eldest daughter, to her sister Bessie.

Neither of them were young, but Bessie was considered juvenile, being still on the right side of forty, and was decidedly a good-looking woman, with a kindly, sympathetic face. It was a subject of village gossip that she set her cap at the Vicar. Certainly, Miriam was oftener in the Doctor's house than anywhere else. It was only a stone's throw from the Vicarage, with the sitting-room window looking on to the road; so that the very first day Nurse Hobbs carried the child out for an airing, the Misses Nunn had run out to have a look at that "poor, dear child," and it gradually became an established habit for Nurse to turn in to the Doctor's to show the ladies how well the baby throve, consequently never a day passed but that Miriam was petted and made much of by the two sisters, and she loved them dearly. On the present occasion, as she rode past on her small shaggy Shetland pony, she nodded and waved her hand, being quite sure in her young experience that either Miss Nunn or Bessie would be on the watch behind the curtain.

"She was six years old last month," said Bessie, in answer to her sister. "A baby, indeed! that child has never been a baby in anything but age. I suppose you know Nurse Hobbs is going back to her daughter? She told the Vicar that Miriam did not require her any longer, as she was with him from morning till night, and that as she was too old to take housework he'd better have a young girl to help Susan and wait on Miriam. So her eldest grandchild Fanny is going to take the place, with the understanding that if anything ails Miriam, Nurse will at once go to the Vicarage."

"Nothing ever does ail her; there never was a healthier child," said Miss Nunn. "I expect Nurse has made a good thing out of it, and retires on a pension."

"Yes, she says the Vicar has behaved very handsomely."

"He was sure to do that," answered Bessie, with a sigh.

"It's time you gave up that idea, Bessie," said her sister; "he'll never marry."

"I suppose not," said Bessie. "He's just wrapt up in that child, and she in him. It's the prettiest sight I ever saw, the care and tenderness of that strong, handsome young man for that little child. Nurse Hobbs says she never leaves him from early morning till she goes to bed at night, and then he always looks in at her the last thing. I met him on the other side of Whalley yesterday, carrying Miriam on his shoulder; he'd been to see Farmer Davis, a good ten miles' walk, and had taken her with him. 'You see,' he said, in his quiet, matter-of-fact way, 'sometimes I want a walk rather longer than Miriam's little legs can manage, so we compromise and thus keep together.' And off he went, with her chattering to him."

"I think it's very serious, and a bad example to the parish," said Miss Nunn. "He just makes an idol of that child! You know, Bessie, he did much the same for his wife, and she was taken. Mark my words, something will happen."

"For goodness sake don't say so, sister," said Bessie, with a look of alarm.

"Ah, but I do," answered Miss Nunn, grimly. "Not but that I love the child—she's truly what everybody calls her, 'the village sunbeam'; but still I say the Vicar makes too much of her. He worships the ground she treads on, and that's a sin," and with that final statement she left the room, and a few seconds later Bessie heard her scolding the cook, because she had forgotten to fill the cat's saucer with milk. Bessie smiled a wistful smile, thinking in her heart, "After all, one must love something."

In the meantime the Vicar and his little daughter rode merrily on. They were bound for a distant farm on the outskirts of his parish, and as they passed through the hamlets, before the solitary cottages, many a head appeared at the windows, or in the porches, and nodded pleasantly, murmuring, "It's only the parson and his little daughter."

It was a lovely June day, and father and daughter rode over the downs, both perfectly happy. The likeness between them was more than usually marked. Miriam's face was her father's in miniature—the same regular features, deep violet eyes, and dark-brown hair, of which she had a great quantity, falling below her waist. This likeness to himself had been at first a disappointment to Cecil Irving—he had hoped to see the mother in the child; but the feeling had worn off in the all-engrossing love which by degrees he lavished upon her. Whilst she was still an infant he had, so to speak, courted her, and Nurse Hobbs declared that the first thing she knew was her father's step on the stairs. Later on, she was brought into his study, and left there at his desire. At four years old he bought her a pony, and began teaching her to read and write—he could hardly wait for her to grow in years, so impatient was he for her companionship. At six years old she never left him, they were together from early morning till Nurse fetched her to go to bed, and she said truly when she told the Vicar, "She don't want me any more, sir; you're just enough for her. Susan wants help; take a younger body, and I'll go home," and the Vicar was glad to accept her dismissal. Grateful as he was to Nurse Hobbs, he was nevertheless jealous of her slight authority over his child, he wanted no one to come between them—she was his, and his alone.

Of course, people blamed him, his own mother and sisters to begin with; he was spoiling the child, such a life was neither good for him nor for her. But Cecil Irving only smiled; he knew that no one could manage her and make her happy as he could, whether it was gathered up in his arms by the fireside, listening to some wonderful story, or out in the open air, riding or walking, and when tired carried on his shoulder. Everything he did she did in her little way; he taught her to skate when other children are satisfied to walk, to swim in the river which ran not far from the Vicarage grounds, and above all things he talked to her—whether she always understood him or not, did not trouble him, that would come in time. All the village knew

and loved her; she was his almoner, and early learnt the needs of her poorer neighbours.

"Here's a beautiful piece of even turf, Miriam; let's have a canter, and then I've a bit of news for you," said the Vicar, after a more than usually lengthened silence.

"All right, father; is it something nice?" asked Miriam, patting her pony quite sufficiently to make Tommy start off.

"I'll leave you to decide that point," answered her father.

She looked up in his face and smiled. "I'm sure it is," she nodded, "you're glad!"

He smiled in return, and then they were silent as the canter became a gallop, until at last they slackened speed and subsided into a walking pace.

"Now then, father, what is it?"

"Your godfather, Mr. Moran, has written to me, proposing to come and spend a week with us; he will bring his son Gilbert with him."

"Oh!" said Miriam. "I've never seen them, have I?"

"Gilbert, no; but Mr. Moran has been several times to see me, only you were too small to remember him," answered the Vicar.

"He gave me my silver mug and fork and spoon, my prayer book, and my coral necklace," said Miriam, slowly enumerating the different items.

"Yes," said her father; "he never forgets either your birthday or Christmas. He was almost like a father to your mother. I am very fond of him."

"Then I am glad he is coming, because now I am old and shall never forget him again. Is Gilbert as big as I am, father?"

Mr. Irving laughed. "Gilbert is at Rugby; he must be nearly sixteen, Miriam," he said.

The little girl's face fell. A young man of nearly sixteen was a consideration. How should she entertain him?

Later, Miriam experienced what was for her quite a novel sensation of shyness when she stood in the porch, holding her father's hand, ready to welcome their eagerly expected guests.

"Gilbert, pay your respects to the mistress of the house," said Mr. Moran, laying his hand kindly on Miriam's head, and Gilbert came forward, smiling pleasantly at this very diminutive "mistress of the house."

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SUGAR AND SPICE—

THE LIMP GIRL.

"AND all things nice, that's what girls are made of." We used to shout that out every time we passed a girls' school when I was a youngster, in eighteen hundred and ever so few.

I'm getting old now, and people think that white hairs bring wisdom, so you will forgive me for telling you something about your treatment of your girls.

"Sakes alive," says an angry mother, "what's an old bachelor got to tell me about my boys, let alone my girls? I'd just as soon ask a house painter to mend my sewing machine."

Wait a minute, madam! I see that although you are the mother of a family you are just as impetuous as when you were a school-girl. I think you'll agree with me that lookers-on see most of the game. That's why old maids' children and bachelors' boys are such paragons of perfection. Nobody knows what a muddle we might make of the management of them if we ever had any of our own; but if we go through the world with our eyes open, we really see more of the ins and outs of family life than busy mothers and fathers do.

Let me tell you further, that the cleverest art critics sometimes could not paint a picture to save their heads, and as for literature—well, anyone who has been the subject of a slashing article in the "Bowl-em-over Review" will tell you that he is perfectly certain the fellow who wrote it never made up a book in his life.

To begin at the beginning, as the children say, I'd recommend all young mothers to remember the Jews of olden days. Every one of them rejoiced in the birth of a son, hoping that he might prove to be the promised Messiah. That was a chance so remote, one in thousands, that we can hardly understand its having had such an effect upon Jewish mothers. But all you English parents can look round on your girls, and see in them the future mothers of the great and the noble and the good, of the ministers who preach the Peace, of the men and women yet to come.

"Now we've caught you," says a bright young wife. "How about the old maids? I have two sisters who have never married, and as they are nearly forty they probably never will. What about them?"

That's sharp of you, madam, and you thought to rout the enemy, but I stick to my guns. Many a governess has more to do with the forming of the characters of her pupils than their mothers have; many a maiden aunt, cousin, or friend acts the part of a mother to the children of her former companions. That's another translation of a familiar text for you, "The desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband."

So be good enough not to teach your children to jeer at "old maids" or "old bachelors," for if these want to do good they have twenty opportunities to every one that you married folks get, who have so much to do in your own little home circle.

Girls are generally said to be their fathers' pets, and so they may be for aught I know, but of this I am certain—that the girls should, as they get older, be one with their mother. A woman

THE ATHLETIC GIRL.

THE SENSITIVE GIRL.

only can tell what a woman feels and has to go through, a woman only can enter into the joys and sorrows of a woman. And that is where the wisdom of the old proverb comes in—

"My son is my son till he gets him a wife,
But my daughter's my daughter all the days of my life."

Therefore, mothers, win your girl's confidence and love while she is yet a child, and you will never lose it. Let her feel that she can bring everything to "mother." There's nothing more useful than a judicious blindness and dumbness in the training of both boys and girls. If you purse up your lips, and say "Hush" to some tale of school mischief, what can you expect but that the next time there is anything on, it will be bottled up instead of bubbling over at home?

If your eyes are ever keenly on the look-out for the tiniest speck or flaw in manner or dress, what can you expect but that your children will have one kind of manner for home, and that not the natural one? Let them feel that "mother" may always be relied on to correct them if they need it, but to make the best of them in everything. The mother should be in the home (let me say it with deepest reverence) a far-off, faint image of what the good God is in Heaven.

"There is no place where earth's sorrows are more felt than up in Heaven,
There is no place where earth's failings have more kindly judgment given."

Don't jump up and say that's a mis-quotation; it may be for all I know, for it's years since I heard the words, but I'll maintain that's the sense of them, at all events.

"What sort of girls do I like best?" did you say. Well, to be candid, I like them all, and if you will be patient with me I will tell you about a few girls I have met, and—well, never mind, I won't say anything about the powder concealed under the jam.

THE SHARP GIRL.

First there's the limp girl. What a trial she always is! Her stockings are usually loose, her boots are generally minus one or two buttons, her hair is rough, and she looks as if she would drop to pieces if you shook her. The outer girl is but an emblem of the inner girl. She has no moral backbone. She'd believe that the moon was made of cream cheese if you told her so, and the consequence is she is a sort of scapegoat at school. Her stronger companions do the mischief, she looks guilty and bears the punishment. What's to be done with her?

Watch her carefully. You will find that she has a strong point somewhere. Didn't she bring you a cup of tea every morning last time you were ill, though she did spill a lot in the saucer? Or doesn't her little baby brother go to sleep in her arms more quickly than anywhere else? Or doesn't her dull eye brighten as she catches sight of a lovely bit of scenery in nature or art, or when she hears the sound of music?

Take note of these things; they will enable you to find out the limp girl's strong point—for be sure she has one. See that you help her to cultivate it.

Then there's the athletic girl. I confess that I am too old-bodied to enjoy her presence, and too old-fashioned to rejoice in feminine cricket. But bless your heart, there's no harm in her; she is downright, honest, and healthy, and if she ever marries will probably make a better mother of children than the sensitive girl.

Aggravating enough this latter must be to busy mothers. I can imagine one of you knocking the book out of her hands and saying, "Don't waste your tears over imaginary troubles, but just come and help me dress poor Johnnie's scalded arm."

But there's good material in both of them; one wants toning down, the other wants tuning up, that's all.

Tones and tunes remind me of the sharp girl. I confess I don't like her. She is always trying to say smart things, and smart things are bound to make some one smart.

THE IMAGINATIVE GIRL.

THE HUMOROUS GIRL.

The sharp girl has to be suppressed. Not unkindly, mind you, for the keenest tongued may still have a kind heart; but every mother who owns such a girl should gradually teach her that "Evil is wrought by want of thought, as well as want of heart."

Next comes the imaginative girl. She needs a lot of guiding and helping. As one has cleverly put it, "One may long and long to be an angel, till one forgets that one is a man." That is the danger of it, but don't immediately fly out and make up your mind you'll stop all that "nonsense." Direct it, that's all.

Teach your imaginative girl that it is good to aim high, but that she must not forget the common matter-of-fact everyday life. She cannot always live in the clouds. Our Master and His disciples had to leave the Mount of Transfiguration and come down to the crowd which surrounded the poor man with his lunatic son. Teach her to "*do* noble things, not dream them all day long," and you will find your imaginative girl will be a sunbeam in your house, an oasis in the desert of life.

Sunbeams, too, you may make of the humorous girls. Laughing is better than crying any day, and it is good to have a girl, or boy either, for the matter of that, who can always find a smile, and always enjoy a joke, provided, of course, that they have learnt somewhat of the fitness of things;—that there is a time as well as a place for everything. Bless the sunny-faced children, I love them all. They are the rainbows which beautify the clouds of home.

MISS PROPRIETY.

I had nearly forgotten Miss Propriety. She is often her mother's pet, and I suppose there is some satisfaction to the feminine heart in seeing clothes look to their best—stockings tight, gloves without a ruck, frock without a crease, just as if the wearer had jumped from a band-box. I confess Miss Propriety pleases me least of all; but then, of course, I know you will all cry shame upon me, and say it's because I'm an old bachelor. Let me whisper a word of warning to the happy mothers who rejoice in such a daughter. Be careful she does not develop into a mere admirer of costly dress and outward show—a vain woman of fashion. Vain means *empty*, you know, and vanity is true emptiness.

A. O. BACHELOR.

COMFORT AT HOME.

WHAT a difference there is in houses, to be sure! You see them all in a row, perhaps, in some London suburb. The builder has done his best to make them as exactly alike as a peck of shelled peas, yet if you stop for a few minutes and look at them carefully, you will see that there is a difference in all when once they are inhabited. The builder makes the house; the woman makes the home—remember that. And a keen observer can make a very good guess at the character of the mistress, and the inside of a house, by studying the outside.

Dirty steps and grimy windows may, as a rule, be taken as the outward and visible sign of internal muddle and misery. It is wonderful what difference can be made in the comfort of a house by the wise use of soap and water, and how soon the newest building will look wretched for want of that use.

We will imagine that some of you have just married and are installed in one of the pretty little villas which are fast taking the place of the ugly houses which used to be so common. You have three objects in view—you want your home to be comfortable, you would like it also to be pretty, and you want to make a penny go as near to twopence as is possible. How can you best set to work to attain all these desirable ends? Please to remember, first, that you are already installed, and the furniture is in its place. This being so, your first duty is to keep all things in good order.

New carpets do not require much sweeping. In fact, for the first six months it is best simply to sweep them lightly every morning. Vigorous brushing of a new carpet simply takes off the surface of the wool. I shall never forget my feelings when an energetic new housemaid held up her dustpan for my edification one morning, remarking, "That carpet do want a lot of brushing, ma'am." The pan was half full of red and blue wool which she had ruthlessly brushed out of my new Turkey carpet. A good way to clean a carpet is to rub it carefully with a sponge wrung out in water.

By the by, with all foreign carpets and rugs, be careful to brush only one way, that is, the way that the threads go. In sweeping an old carpet, scraps of damp newspaper sprinkled about do better than tea-leaves, as the former do not stain.

If you want your house to be thoroughly clean and sweet, avoid laying carpets to the walls. The boards are easily stained, and if you do not care for that sort of work, floor-cloth can be laid down instead, so leaving the corners and cracks, which form such nests for dust, to be easily cleaned. Arrange the work of the house regularly, whether you do it yourself or have servants to do it. What is anybody's work, ends by being nobody's duty; and work which can be done at any time is generally done at no time at all. In cleaning a room, don't forget that dust accumulates on

walls and ceilings ; therefore, they need sweeping at least once a fortnight. How can a home be comfortable when you run your head through a cobweb occasionally, or look up from your paper to see a spider dangling from his thread within an inch of your nose ?

Don't be afraid of fresh air. Open all windows at the top as well as bottom ; the foul air escapes at the top. If you doubt this, stand on a high chair or steps in a room where the gas is lighted and you will see—no, feel—the necessity of ventilating the top of a room. Some people have an idea that night air is bad, so they close all windows, even in the hottest weather, before they go to bed. There never was a greater mistake. In London, especially, the night air is the purest, for the very good reason that most fires are out. Sleep with your window open a tiny bit at the top, even in the winter—of course, taking care not to sleep in a draught—and you will be far more refreshed than if it had been closed.

Wipe the top of all cupboards once a fortnight with a sponge or house-flannel dipped in a weak solution of Condy's fluid. By the by, that same fluid is invaluable in a house. A few drops of it in a saucer of water will keep the food sweet in your larder. The same standing in a room will attract all impurities, and there is nothing that can compare with it for keeping baby's bottle accessories sweet and clean. I always have these bottles kept soaking in it all through the hot weather. The moment the fluid loses its red colour and turns brown it is worthless, owing to the impurities it has absorbed, and should be replaced by a fresh supply. The only drawback to Condy's fluid is the stain it leaves on basins, etc., but this can easily be removed with Sapolio or Crystal soap.

Don't be afraid of the sun. Dear old sun ! if only people realised what health and power are in your rays, they would not be in such a hurry to shut you out of their houses. A dark room is, as a rule, more likely to be unhealthy and to hold the germs of disease than a light one.

Arrange your rooms tidily, but don't be fussy about them. Husbands or sons just home from a tiring day's work, want to throw themselves into comfortable attitudes and rest awhile. How well do I remember the drawing-room of my early days (I won't say how many years ago), where one was expected never to move a chair from its particular square of carpet. Such rooms may be the pride of the tidy housekeeper, but they are not the pleasure of the loving wife and mother. Home should be a place of comfort, not a place of irksome restraint. By all means endeavour to have a place for everything, and put everything in its place ; but this does not mean that it is never to leave it.

Clean windows, pretty curtains (not those objectionable short blinds which always will get more or less muddled and crooked, but long curtains which you can wash at home and pin on a bed to dry), and spotless steps should be the outward emblems of a cosy nest where the day's work and worry may be forgotten, and husband and wife, parent and children enjoy each other's society free from outside cares.

Beware of dust-bins ; they are death traps if used, as they so often are, for the reception of all refuse. Burn every scrap of animal and vegetable matter, and only use the dust-bin for dust. By the by, never burn bits of rag, however small, but put them in with the dust. There they will be found by the pickers of the dustyards, and will be converted into paper later on.

Be very careful about the water you drink, and if you use a filter, which is much to be desired, see that you clean your filter regularly. Many people seem to look upon a filter as a dirt-consuming apparatus, and never stop to think that if it takes the impurities out of the water, it must retain them. If charcoal is used, it should be boiled occasionally in a solution of Condy's fluid, put on in cold water and boiled for an hour or more, then allowed to get gradually cold again.

In arranging your rooms, place your beds so that you do not face the light, and put your tables so that in writing, reading, and working anyone can have the left hand to the light, instead of facing it. If you have much needlework to do (and what careful mother has not ?), be sure to sit with your left hand to the light ; it will try your eyes far less than any other way.

Last of all, if you want your home to be full of comfort, remember that "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." Do what you will ; rise up early and lie down late, you will make but a poor job of it all, if the Lord's blessing is not with you. Hearts that believe and trust in Him can be happy anywhere, and when troubles come, as come they must in this world, the husband and wife who are at peace with God, will find that these passing sorrows do but draw them nearer "Each to the other, *both* to God."

E. M. WATERWORTH.

AROUND THE COTTAGE DOOR.

THE summer light is over all,
So brightly, warmly glowing ;
The birds amid the branches call,
And winds are softly blowing.
The fields their robes of beauty wear,
The trees with bloom are crownèd—
Oh, God be thanked for days so fair,
When earth is joy-surrounded !

Yet fairer than the twining flowers
Among the grasses springing,
And sweeter than the scented bowers
Where honey-bees are winging,
A mother's looks of love appear—
Her smile like morning breaketh—
The sunshine of her homestead dear,
Its summer light she maketh.

A simple village-scene is this—
A mother's face so tender,
And bairnies in the cloudless bliss
That Love and Light can render ;
A gentle purr from pussy's breast
Maternal joy is telling—
Sweet Peace doth like a garland rest
Around the cottage-dwelling.

With pictures and with games content
The children play in gladness ;
Yet while their mother's eyes are bent
Above them, free from sadness,
Deep in her heart a whispered prayer
Is for her bairns ascending :
"I know not what the years may bear—
Lord, be their Light unending !"

M. S. HAYCRAFT.

SISTER PHEBE.

BY MRS. SKINNER.

HARBOUR with its deep, dark blue waters. The sun is sparkling on the waves of the island-dotted Ægean Sea, purpling the distant hills, glittering on the snows of Parnes, and gleaming on the white columns of the temple at Athens, crowned with the golden spear and shield of Minerva. The harbour is filled with craft of all sizes—corn-ships of Alexandria and the Black Sea, pleasure and fishing boats. There lies a small vessel destined for Crete; it will also carry passengers bound for Rome, who, re-embarking at Crete, and sailing along the beautiful Mediterranean past the green isle of Sicily, will after many days land on the fair shores of Italia.

A little party on the harbour steps are bidding tearful farewells. The central figure of the group is a woman, who presently embarks on the Cretan ship. The anchor is lifted, and with sails set, and the rowers at their oars, she starts on her journey. While ever her friends can be seen, the lonely passenger stands watching with straining eyes. Then they are lost to sight. Athens' temple-crowned hill also fades, and the far-away coast-line of Greece disappears—all vanishing in the blue distance.

A woman on a journey—a perilous journey, and to Rome, where the monster Nero is reigning, and where already has sounded the cry, "Death to the Christians!" Who is she? See her sitting under the shadow of the ship's square sail. She draws a letter from her robe—a circular letter, so we shall do no harm in looking over her shoulder. In after days it was read by the holy Polycarp, the martyred Ignatius, the cultured Justin, and the learned Clement; and in still later times by—*ourselves!* The Epistle to the Romans.

The traveller's name was *Phebe*, meaning *The sunny one.* Going down a monotonous road in a London suburb one day, the red letter-pillar was noticed to be the only bright spot amid the winter's gloom. A few days afterwards there was a note in the daily papers commenting on the gloomy aspect of our streets, and suggesting that we have not only red pillars, but red umbrellas and waterproofs. But if all Christians wore bright faces, there would be no need for these red objects. Here is an extract from Phebe's letter on this very subject: "Now the God of hope fill you with all *joy* . . . . in believing."

The traveller's description. This we also get from the letter she carries—*Saint.* The people to whom she was going were to receive her as saints, she being one too. "Called to be saints" is the description of Christians given in her letter. A saint is one who is separated, sanctified. Nowadays the word is mostly used in reference to God's children who have been called home, or in derision. We each should remember that this is the name every Christian bears, and should so glorify it that none dare sneer at it. Saintliness is to be gained equally well in the crowd as in the cloister. In China they have kitchen gods; in England we need kitchen saints and household saints. *Sister*—"Whosoever shall do the will of My Father . . . the same is My brother and sister." Obedience is the root of divine relationship. And if Christ was her elder brother, the poor Greek slave-girl and the wanton priestess at the heathen temple were also her sisters. It is nice to think of a well-dressed woman with money in her purse being our sister, but if we are saints, we shall regard with deeper interest the tie of sisterhood which binds us to the poor and degraded. *Servant*—This is the same word in the original as is translated in other places "deacon." Her sisterhood was proved by service, as her sainthood was by her sisterliness. And as servant, deaconess, her work was recognised by the church at Cenchrea, of which she was a member. Paul, who wrote the letter she carried, called himself "a servant of Jesus Christ." There is no higher title for us than that. *Succourer*—This was the form her service took. A changer of sorrow into joy. If her enemy was hungry, she fed him. Self-denial also was included in the succour she gave. If wine made her brother to offend, she took none; pleasing not herself, but bearing the infirmities of the weak.

Questions asked of the traveller. This is the age of interviewing. Perhaps some of us would like to ask Sister Phebe a question or two. "You were once, sister, a heathen woman—a follower of the immoral Greek worship of the false gods. How do you account for this great change which has come over you?" Turning to her treasured letter, we can fancy that she gives each of her answers from its pages. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

"What induces you, Sister Phebe, to take this journey and to do this work?" "Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?"

"But are you not afraid?" "We glory in tribulations. All things work together for good to them that love God. If so be that we suffer with Him . . . . we may be also glorified together."

"But are you not often discouraged by non-success and fault-finding?" "*Patient* continuance in well doing. Whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Critical remarks about Sister Phebe. If the Master did not escape criticism, we are sure Sister Phebe will not. Some, perhaps, may say with regard to her, "Well, but she was a woman of leisure—probably a widow, and had no difficulty in finding time to do Christian work. I am a very busy woman, and can find no time for entering into any definite service." No doubt Phebe was a widow, or we think Paul would not have countenanced such a journey in those immoral days, for fear of bringing reproach upon the name of Christian. But how comes it about that it is the busiest woman that serves Christ most? On reading the life of Mrs. Booth, for instance, you will find that she was one of the busiest of women, with very little domestic help, yet it was in the midst of her household cares that she started her remarkable labours and trained herself for her future work. What we want is to have the *will* to work, the faculty of arranging our work in a business-like way, and the art of combining our work with Christian service. As illustrations of the latter, we may instance the distributing of bills concerning meetings, or leaflets accompanied with a word, as we take the baby out for a walk, and inviting lonely young people to tea instead of the friend who is able to return our hospitality.

Maternal Joys. *p.* 103.

Another criticism may be, "She was a rich woman, or she would never have been able to pay her passage-money. I am poor." Do not be quite sure that Sister Phebe was rich; she may have been very poor, and have had her passage-money paid by aid of a collection, at which many grumbled when asked to give, wondering why Sister Phebe couldn't stay at home as they did. But supposing she was rich, that of itself did not make her willingness to serve. Giving forms but a small part, though an important part, of the service God asks from us.

"But," says another, "Sister Phebe was no doubt a woman of strong nerves. I am very shy and nervous." Yes, we know many Christian women are, but there is one line in Phebe's letter you have perhaps not noticed: "Yield yourselves unto God." Following this advice, such women have become strong to serve, proving the truth of one of the closing lines of the letter: "Him that is of power to stablish you."

Sister Phebe's secret. The secret that made her brave, that made her enthusiastic to serve, that made her wise to see ways of service, was all contained in the one word *love.* The love that prompted the Jewish women to cluster close round the cross, to gather early at the tomb, to spread the joyful tidings of a resurrected Lord, had touched her heart. Let us gather close round the cross; and looking up into the sad, loving face of the Saviour, dying for us, dare any of us say, "I cannot serve"?

FOR MOTHERS AND WIVES.

BY PHYLLIS BROWNE.

How to "Get Through" the Holidays.

CHILDREN naturally look forward to holiday time with glee, and want to get as much pleasure out of it as they can. True, some of us know children who care nothing for holidays, and who, when breaking-up time comes, say, "I shall be glad when we have to come back to school again." If we make inquiries, however, we usually find that these poor children have lost their mothers, or they belong to the unfortunate class who "are not happy at home." The average child glories in holidays, and it is right that he should do so.

The joy of the children in holidays is not always shared by their mothers, however; nor can we wonder that this is the case. To have a band of youngsters who feel their life in every limb let loose in a house, and to keep their active little bodies and minds interested and happy during the whole holiday time is no light task, and mothers are to be excused if they sometimes dread it. Yet they will find that it is much better to take hold of it energetically than to accept what comes. "The great art of life is to let things slide," we have lately been told; but this is a cowardly precept. The great art of life is to—

> ". . . be up and doing,
> With a heart for any fate;
> Still achieving, still pursuing,
> Learn to labour and to wait."

Let mothers, therefore, boldly face this difficulty of what to do with the children in the holidays. Make plans for the children, give them something to do, and let them enter into the joy of helping others. Those children are not the happiest who have unlimited treats and unlimited toys provided for them. As a wise mother once said, "You cannot put happiness in a great sack labelled 'Candy and toys.'" For the most part, children get the greatest fun out of toys that they contrive for themselves. Put them in the way, therefore, of contriving something, and *give them pleasant work to do.* If there is a plot of garden belonging to the house, let each child have a portion to take care of and cultivate. Let both boys and girls be encouraged to do a little carpentering. This will teach them to use their fingers, and the skill thus gained will be an advantage to them as long as they live.

Of course we know that carpentering and gardening are employments suitable for other times as well as holidays. Yet children who are busy learning lessons during the greater part of the year frequently know nothing of these pursuits, simply because they have missed the opportunity of following them. This is a great loss. Girls are never worse off for knowing how to drive in nails, and do small repairs; while as for the boys, daughters-in-law have cause to bless mothers who bring up their boys to be handy about the house.

A Word on Behalf of the Girls.

"Satan," we know, "finds some mischief still for idle hands to do." To avoid the mischief, all that is wanted is that mothers should be beforehand in the matter, and find useful, pleasant work for busy little hands to do. But here a word must be said on behalf of the girls. Mothers, while you are arranging for delightful occupations for the boys, do not be hard upon the girls, and insist upon their spending a large part of their holiday in sewing and mending. Girls must learn to sew, of course. We all see the necessity of it, but half an hour each day is quite long enough during the holidays, because at this time children ought not to sit still. If the girls are to be taught to be useful, let them learn to cook and dust and clean rather than spend ever so much of each day bending over a seam. When putting the children to work, set an object before them; let them lay aside each task before it becomes tedious, and whenever it is possible encourage them to persevere by praise and kindly sympathy.

Take a little pains in this way, and the holidays will be past almost before you realise that they have begun; and at their close both mothers and children will be able to say that they have had a really good time.

Easy Shoes.

Wives who do their own housework, are their own nurses, cooks, and housemaids, and who find that their feet ache very much in the evening after the many journeys up and down stairs have been taken, are advised to be careful about the sort of shoes they wear when at work. They will be wise to discard loose, easy, thin shoes, and shoes that are worn down on one side, and need to be re-soled or newly heeled. Shoes or boots should fit well, have firm soles of reasonable thickness, and be neither light nor loose. The world is not nearly so hard a place for people who are well shod as it is for people who are ill shod. Easy shoes are all very well when we are sitting over the fire, but they are not fit for going up and down stairs.

One Way of Preventing Corns.

Speaking of shoes reminds us that one way to prevent corns is to provide ourselves with two or three pairs of shoes and boots, and to wear them alternately. The explanation of this fact is that corns, bunions, blisters, and other painful troubles of the sort are nearly always produced by continuous pressure or friction at a certain point. No two pairs of shoes, however, "bear" on the feet exactly at the same spot. Therefore, to change the shoes frequently interferes with the continuity, and so prevents the unpleasant result.

The avoidance of corns is not the only advantage belonging to the custom of keeping two or three pairs of shoes or boots in wear at once. It is an economy to use shoes thus, because they wear longer than would otherwise be the case. If the best service is desired, boots and shoes ought not to be worn more than two days at most, without being put on one side to be thoroughly and slowly dried. This is necessary even in dry weather, for the feet themselves emit a certain amount of moisture, sufficient to affect the shoe.

Of course, it will never do to put boots or shoes to the fire in order to dry them. Such treatment would ruin the finest boots that ever were made. One of the best ways of preserving boots is to have two or three pairs in wear, and to fill damp boots with dry oats. The grains gently absorb the moisture from the leather, and while making it dry keep it soft. If boots were very damp, oats used in this way would have to be changed once or twice, and they would have to be dried before being utilised again. Mountaineers and sportsmen, who are obliged to use very expensive boots, frequently dry them thus. They do not care to trust clothing, on which so much of their comfort depends, to the tender mercies of any ignorant person who happens to be employed as "boots" at a wayside inn where they may be stopping.

Home Customs.

Do not give up helpful home customs because guests are in the house. We are too often tempted to imitate the ways of friends rather than show them ours. Let us make of ourselves all of which we are capable, and then do not, either literally or metaphorically whisk anything under the sofa when company comes. A well-known bishop has set a good example in this matter. At the close of a brilliant reception held at his home, he took down the Bible, saying, "It is always our custom to have prayers after supper." To some who were present the influence of the act was sweeter than the fragrance of the flowers and more lasting than the souvenirs which each guest received.

Rice Snowballs.

Wash a small teacupful of rice in two or three waters, then let it simmer at the side of the stove for two or three hours, with a pint of milk and a dessert-spoonful of powdered almonds, adding more milk from time to time to make up the quantity to a pint and a half. When well soaked and swollen, sweeten the rice, beat it well, and pour it into small cups, which have been rinsed in water and left wet. Turn them on to a glass dish when cold, and put a spoonful of jam on each small shape. A spoonful of whipped cream may be laid on the top of the jam, though this will be found a matter of individual taste.

A FAMOUS MOTHERS' HYMN AND ITS AUTHOR.

BY B. MCCALL BARBOUR.

FOR fifty years the music of that now familiar hymn, "The Happy Land," has made joy in many a childish heart, and gained an entrance there for the teaching bound up in its touching and simple words. There are few, if any, within the bounds of Britain who are unacquainted with its oft-heard words and music, and far beyond the limits of the British Isles its power extends. Away amongst the swarthy Chinese and the Indian race, into the prairie and the backwoods home of the New World and our Colonies, its simple story has made a way by that "immortal music" to which its lines are wed. Although its influence is so far-reaching and its sphere so extensive; although it has been the one hymn which has lingered with us through childhood and youth up to our prime, and has been a comfort to many even in old age, we doubt if many beyond the immediate circle of his friends were much acquainted with its now deceased author, Mr. Andrew Young. This may be easily accounted for by the quiet, unobtrusive nature of the man.

Mr. Andrew Young was born in Edinburgh. His father had followed the profession of a teacher for nearly half a century, and with marked success conducted one of the principal schools in that city. His now famous son chose the profession of his father, and after a brilliant career at the university he was fully equipped for the work of his life, and developed capacities which raised him high amongst those of his profession. While attending the classes of Professor Wilson at the university he gained the respect and commendation of that worthy professor by the effusions which at that time proceeded from his pen. It was while a member of this class he was awarded the premium for the best poem on the Scottish Highlands. At the age of twenty-one he was appointed by the Town Council of Edinburgh to the head-mastership of Niddry Street School. For eleven years he occupied this position, and it was while acting in this capacity in the year 1838 that he composed his world-wide famous hymn, "The Happy Land."

In 1840 Mr. Young received an appointment as head English master in Madras College, St. Andrews, which post he occupied for thirteen years. During that term amongst his pupils were many who in after years rose to high positions. In 1853 Mr. Young returned with his family to his native city, and after his settlement in it was known as one of its best and most highly esteemed citizens.

From his youth Mr. Young was a writer of verses. In 1876 a collection of these was published under the title of "The Scottish Highlands and other Poems," which received a favourable reception from the public.

Mr. Young, as well as being a poet, was something of a scientist. His efforts in this direction gained for him a fellowship in the Royal Geographical and Geological Societies.

All through his life he took a deep interest in the work

of Sabbath-schools, and there was no better conducted or more successful Sabbath-school in the kingdom than that over which he acted for a number of years as superintendent. He merited and received the respect and affection of both teachers and scholars, and, indeed, of all with whom he came in contact.

It is always interesting to know the circumstances and motives which give rise to such products of the pen as touch the heart of a people and become their common property because of common use. It can truly be said that if any hymn ever was in sympathy with the people of a country and with mankind at large, that hymn is "The Happy Land."

The circumstances under which its words were penned are somewhat strange, so it may be worth while transcribing here a short account of its production as related by its author to a personal friend, and as recorded by him in the *Christian World*.

"One evening, in the late autumn of the year 1838, as I was passing along one of the streets of the city (Edinburgh), near to Adam Square, and not a stone-cast from the house where Sir Walter Scott was born, I met a lady who was an intimate friend. In the course of a brief conversation, I was invited to spend an evening with herself and family, which I cordially agreed to do, as I knew that she and they were all very musical, and an evening at home with them was certain to be a great treat to me, for I am passionately fond of music, especially Scotch music. The evening came, and with it the incident which, humanly speaking, brought on the opportunity that, under Providence, led to the writing of 'The Happy Land.' After tea, the lady of whom I speak played, among other pieces of music, one which was entitled 'The Siege of Delhi' (Clive's, not Clyde's, siege). As is well known, in that selection there occurs a very sweet air—soft, pathetic, and yet with an influence that stirs while it enamours the sense. My friend played it so beautifully that I requested a repetition of it, and after that begged for another repetition, and yet another, until I would for some time have nothing else played. My soul was won by its charm and rapture, and I was, for the time being, like 'one beside himself,' as if carried away to another world of being by some potent and mysterious influence.

"Leaving the house shortly afterwards, and still in an excited state of feeling, I was filled with but one strong controlling desire, viz., to write words appropriate as far as possible (for I had the rhythmic faculty) to the highly devotional suggestiveness of the music. During the entire night my heart throbbed with a strange emotion; thoughts thronged my brain, words began to take a melodious flow, and in the early morning hours my first act was to sit down and write the words of a hymn, identical almost in every particular with those now composing it. That was fifty years ago, and yet even now, I feel notwithstanding that long intervening lapse of time, with its many experiences, as if the inspiration with which Divine Providence was pleased to bless me on that memorable occasion (for I at least can never forget it) had occurred only yesterday. For if ever there was an inbreathing in a human soul of a heaven-born inspiration, I am as certain as I live that it was when I wrote the words of 'The Happy Land.' Little remains to be told. Of the composer of the soul-captivating air I have never been able to learn anything. Some persons, who have been writing lately on the subject of the hymn, have spoken of the air referred to as being an old Indian melody, one that possibly had been heard in the Indian 'forest primeval' many and many a year ago. I do not think anything of the kind. The music of 'The Siege of Delhi' is probably not more than seventy or eighty years old, and, very likely, the work of a British composer. But whoever the writer of it was, I would gladly give something to know, and to express my very great acknowledgment for its blessed inspiration."

Such were the circumstances which gave birth to this immortal hymn. There is a something in the simplicity of both the words and music which makes it peculiarly suitable to the simple childish mind, and while the mothers of Britain teach their little ones to sing their Maker's praise we feel certain "The Happy Land" will ever be amongst the foremost of their songs, and so its influence shall extend, till in the "Happy Land" of which it speaks the little ones who sing it here, shall know its author for themselves, and join with him in the great chorus of "a new song,"

"And bright above the sun
Reign, reign for aye."

[We feel sure that readers of the above brief sketch will be interested in the following authentic narrative, which well illustrates the powerful influence of Andrew Young's familiar hymn.—Ed.]

"AT LAST!"

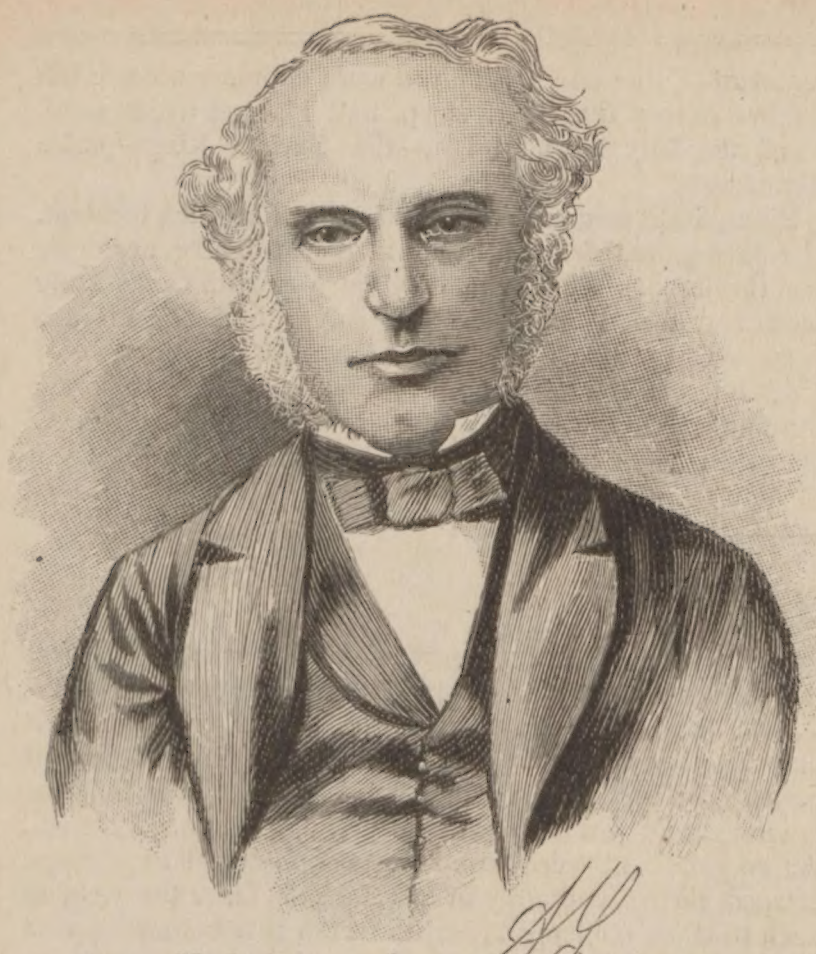
A True Incident.

BY A SUNDAY-SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT.

Not long ago I was residing in the neighbourhood of one of our large provincial hospitals, and as I had been asked by a friend, who was one of the lady-nurses there, to pay her a visit, in order that I might see something of the work to which she and many other noble-hearted women had consecrated their lives, I set forth one afternoon for the purpose. How little I thought that so ordinary a circumstance would be followed by such a result as that which I am about to record!

Arriving at the hospital, I asked for my friend Sister Ella, and was conducted into the sitting-room, where visitors to the Sisters were usually received. My friend shortly after came to me, saying that, as she was on duty, she would like me at once to accompany her to the ward in which she was then engaged.

Just as we were entering the door of the room, she turned to me and whispered, "We have a poor man here who was brought in a few days ago owing to a bad



accident. He is dying, and I think he is wandering in his mind, for he keeps asking me what his mother said, and as she died when he was a lad, and he is now over sixty years of age, of course he must be rambling; but speak to him, and then, perhaps, you will be able to judge."

She took me to his bedside, and then she left us whilst she went to attend to some of the other patients.

I sat down, and taking one of the wasted and already cold hands in mine, I said, "You are very ill, my friend, but I hope you are not in much pain."

"No," said he, "I am not in bodily pain just now," laying stress on the word bodily; and then he paused.

I asked, "Are you happy? I trust you are not troubling about anything which might make you forget that, for you, all is soon passing away."

At these words he roused himself, looked at me, and exclaimed, "Ah, then, ma'am, you can tell me—I'm sure you can—what I want so much to know. Sister there is very kind and good, but she evidently thinks I don't know what I'm saying. But I'm not wandering—no, I'm not wandering; I'm quite in my right mind. I'm thinking over my past life, and I'm wondering whether the Lord will forgive me, and receive such a wicked, drinking, swearing man as I've been. But I was not always so bad; time was when I was a happy boy. I'll tell you, if I can, about it, and then you *will* help me, won't you, ma'am?"

Of course, I assented, and he went on—"My parents, up to the time of my father's death, were comfortably off, and I was their only child. I can just remember my father; he died when I was about six or seven years old, and then mother had to take in needlework to support herself and me. Oh! but she was good; she used to tell me stories out of the Bible, and many a text and hymn she taught me. After my father died, she seemed to be always ailing, and when I was about twelve, she, too, was taken from me. Then a distant relation offered me a home; but I did not seem to care for anything, and I soon began to go wrong. I took up with bad companions, and at last I ran away to sea. There isn't time to tell you all about my after life, but it was just going from bad to worse, until I met with the accident which has brought me here. And now it is curious that the things are running in my head that my dear mother used to tell me. I can say a good many of the texts and hymns, but there's one hymn she used to sing to me which I can't recollect. I could sing it in those days, and I try and try to remember the words, but somehow they will not come back to me. If I was to hear that hymn, I'm quite sure I should remember it. Oh! do try, please, ma'am, and tell me what it is."

Here was a difficult task. I felt there was no time to be lost—the poor dying man was so exhausted with the effort he had made that I was afraid he was too far gone to take in what I might say. I began one hymn, then another, and another, until I almost gave up in despair; for after each a sad, weary "No" fell from his lips.

At last, hoping as it were against hope, I said, almost to myself—

"There is a happy land,
Far, far away."

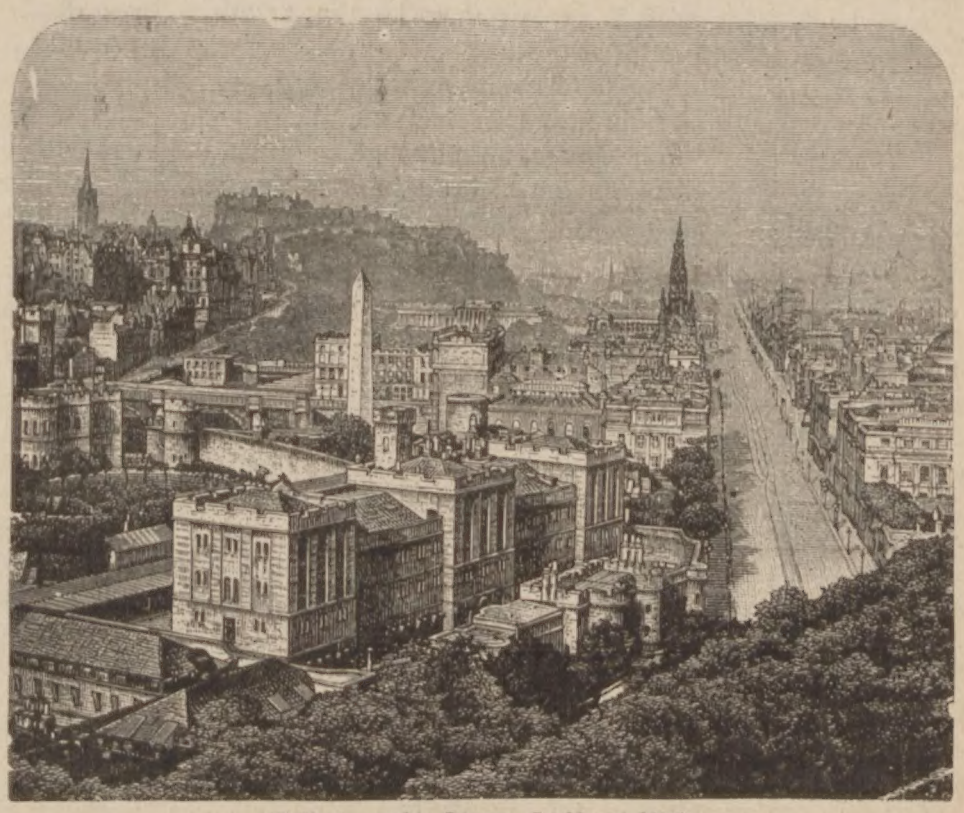
I was quite frightened at the effect it produced.

He turned quickly to me, tightened his grasp of my hand, whilst convulsive sobs shook the bed. "That's it! that's it! that's the one!" he cried, the tears streaming down his cheeks. "Oh, do, do sing it—sing it all through!"

Sister Ella hastened to him, thinking the end was come, and I asked her whether, if I granted the earnest entreaty, it would disturb the other patients.

She said she thought not, so I sang the simple hymn softly through.

When I had finished, he seemed satisfied, and feebly



Edinburgh, from Calton Hill.

said, "Thank you," closed his eyes, and murmured, "Mother, I'm not doubting.

'Bright in that happy land
Beams every eye.'

No sin—all—all forgiven."

Then he was quiet, and thinking he was asleep, I moved away.

I went round the ward, stopping at one and another bed of suffering to offer a passing word of sympathy, and shortly afterwards took my leave.

The next day I had a note from Sister Ella, saying that the poor man had quietly passed away soon after my departure. She added that the worn expression quite left his face during that short sleep, and his last words were, "Tell the lady it's all bright—the Saviour King—praise His name!"

Surely little comment is needed on the foregoing incident. The loving, faithful, Christian mother teaching her little one the lessons which can only be found in God's Holy Word and such hymns as "The Happy Land" is no new story. Only let all to whom is committed the care of Christ's lambs see to it that they sow the seed in the early morning faithfully and prayerfully, and sooner or later it shall spring up and bear fruit unto everlasting life.

TEMPER.

NO close observer of social life can fail to agree with the Bishop who said that "Temper is nine-tenths of Christianity." As we look around, and note what it is that creates the disturbing element in so many homes, we see in very many cases that it is a temper, either touchy, fretful, passionate, or sulky, and not under the control of the possessor. With much truth a poet says—

"Of all bad things by which mankind are curst,
Their own bad tempers surely are the worst."

The possession of a temper is not the important question, after all; but the fact that it is undisciplined, and so rules instead of being ruled by its owner. People inherit their tempers from their forefathers, and generally a temper becomes bad when adverse circumstances try it beyond its unaided endurance. Unaided, because there is no temper that cannot, by the grace of God, become better, if that grace be perseveringly sought; there is no disposition so evil that prayer and watchfulness cannot amend, if those weapons of our warfare be used with perseverance. It may be a long task, and all through life the Christian soldier may be conscious only that he is in active service fighting his foe, and not letting it conquer him; but as "He that ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city," so great indeed is his reward.

Thrown into contact with dispositions which are angry and easily roused to wrath, how best can one help them to help themselves? Of course, all hints given must be adapted to the conditions under which they are to be used, and it is well to see if any rules can be laid down for our guidance.

In many families there is a "skeleton" kept close shut up in its cupboard when there are strangers present, but which is brought out very often when there is no necessity whatever for doing so. You are perfectly well aware that the discussion of a particular subject irritates some one or more members of the family; you know that the very recollection of its existence jars upon their temper, and yet without a moment's reflection you turn the key, open the cupboard, and take the skeleton out. It may be a story of shame and disgrace that is far better not mentioned; it may be some sin which one member habitually indulges in, and of which to speak only makes matters worse; it may exist in reduced circumstances or the unkind treatment of others—whatever it may be that makes the skeleton, it is far wiser and kinder to keep it in retirement.

Perhaps one member of the family has a different religious creed or holds views other than your own on some special subject. You know perfectly well that all discussions end in loss of temper, either on one side or the other. Would it not be better to avoid the subject, or speak of it only when you are sure of your ground? You are out of patience with him for differing from yourself. You think he is wrong, and you are right, and perhaps this may be true; yet no good will accrue from anger and excited arguments. Respect the individuality of all, and remember the right of each to think for himself, and the truth that before his own Master he stands or falls.

By this I do not mean that you are not to seek to win over others to your cause, if you feel inclined to do so. It has been said lately, "The proselytising instincts may be never quite morally defensible, even as between husband and wife. Nevertheless, in all strong, convinced, ardent souls it exists, and must be reckoned with." But there are many methods of influencing people other than by controversy.

Some people, too, have a way of talking at others. It is extremely ill-bred, as well as unkind, and the effect is often irritating. A guest is present, and you hold a conversation with her, in which there are oblique references to the opinions of A., also present, and which you know—probably the visitor does not—will certainly jar upon her. In her hearing you "run down" things you know she cares for; you declaim against some hobby of which she is very fond; you find fault needlessly with someone she likes, or some hero she admires. These and other things you do and say, all the while conscious, or half conscious, that A. is being irritated, though perhaps in the presence of the third person she may not show it.

Raillery and banter are frequently useful elements in home life. They form vent-pegs for the natural exuberance of youth; they help to chisel off angularities and smooth away roughnesses of character, as well as check odd tricks and peculiarities. In family life the principle of "give and take" often obtains, B. retorting to C. in the same jocose spirit, and D. enjoying E.'s fun when levelled at himself. But F. may not be able to stand "chaff" at all, and be inclined to take all joking seriously, and to be wounded and hurt at the badinage which the rest receive so kindly. In some cases F. can be laughed out of his sensitiveness, but sometimes he cannot. He is deficient in any sense of humour, or he takes mere banter too deeply. Undoubtedly, if it hurts his feelings, and he is made angry or vexed, it should be stopped at once.

To turn into ridicule any infirmity or weakness is decidedly wrong, and if a person thus made fun of is annoyed and loses his temper, I think that many excuses can be made for him. In particular, any bodily infirmity

is no fit subject for mirth. It is a trial permitted by Almighty God, and to mimic those who are thus afflicted, to hurt their feelings on the subject in any way, is culpably cruel.

The tempers of people are often needlessly tried by want of tact in others. A man comes home tired from his office or work, and his wife immediately pours out her grievances concerning the shortcomings of the housemaid, the mistakes in the baker's bill, or the probability of Tommy catching the measles. Now, though Paterfamilias is a kind husband, willing to share his wife's housekeeping troubles, and Tommy is to him as dear as the apple of his eye, still he feels at the moment annoyed and vexed at having these troubles hurriedly thrust upon him. A wife who does this often irritates her husband, who either gives way to expressions of annoyance, or appears indifferent, and as she comments upon both or either, a wordy war is frequently the result. If she be sensible, she will lay aside the burden of care she has been bearing all day, and after her husband has had his evening meal, and is enjoying his easy-chair, she will tell him her troubles, and she will find the result far different.

All this refers to the treatment of others. But supposing that the reader possesses a bad temper, what then? If it be a violent, angry temper, it is difficult, certainly, to control it, but not by any means impossible. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Faith in Him, perseverance in prayer, and perfect confidence in His power to help you, will work wonders. But you must "Pray to God and hammer away," as the saying is. You must systematically set to work to conquer yourself, and use common-sense means to that end. If there were more common sense in our religion we should not fail so often in fulfilling its obligations, one of which certainly is to bring forth those fruits of the spirit called "peace," "gentleness," "meekness," which virtues cannot flourish in the ground of anger and passion. If you know that certain things annoy you extremely, endeavour to avoid them. If you cannot play a game without becoming angry should you lose it, do not play. If you are certain that talking of a particular subject rouses all those feelings that you desire to keep in check, then let it alone. You must treat yourself carefully, and until you are stronger and more self-controlled you must simply shun all chances of losing your temper.

Check your wrath at the beginning. When those angry feelings rise, do your best to smother them before they master you. Words and actions are worse than the feelings. Try and brighten yourself by all means in your power. Put away every cause of bad temper from your mind, and to this end read an amusing book, or take a nice walk, or rouse yourself into doing an act of charity and love. Pray in advance. Knowing that you are going to be tried during the day, defend yourself by earnest prayer beforehand, and in any case such wise protection cannot but strengthen and sustain.

JOSEPHA CRANE.

"SEEN AND NOT HEARD."

"CHILDREN should be seen and not heard."

It must often occur to children to ask why, if this saying be correct, God gave them tongues, and gave them, at the same time, so lively a desire to make use of them. Children who talk for the mere sake of talking are bores of the biggest kind; though we are much inclined to think that those who bring them up are more to blame than the children.

We have in mind just now certain children whose silly utterances are greeted with an indulgent laugh, and who are thus being trained in the belief that their silliness is admirable. For such children to "be seen and not heard" is the desire of any unfortunate person who is expected to listen and to admire.

But the real, childlike child, who "wants to know" because he *does* want to know—is it not flying in the face of Nature to shut him up with the dictum, "Children should be seen and not heard"? It *is* trying to have one's mind on the stretch, and one's wits on the alert, to reply to every "Why is this?" and "Why is that?" "What does this mean?" and "Why is that done?" It is infinitely easier to bid the child be quiet; it saves a lot of trouble to the grown-up folk. But what a check is thus given to the unfolding of the infantile mind!

Let us for the moment put ourselves in a similar position to the child's. We have journeyed, we will say, to a strange place. Everything is new and unknown to us; our interest is awakened, we want to understand what we see. "Whose house is that?" "Can you tell me the name of that castle or church?" "Where does this road lead to?" "How often do the steamboats run?" If some shorthand writer could be at our elbow taking down our words, we should be considerably astonished to find that our holiday talk consists largely of questions. It is a natural impulse, and one on which we may unconsciously plume ourselves. "We have an inquiring mind," we say. How should we like it if the person questioned should crush us with a solemn and reproving rejoinder, "Travellers should be seen and not heard"?

A child is in precisely the same position as a traveller. He has but lately come into a strange, new world; the commonplace is a treasure-house, a wonder-land to him. How is the child to know the meaning of it all if he does not ask for information? Much valuable knowledge may be given by intelligent, painstaking replies to intelligent questions. For children must form ideas about what they see and hear. If they are not assisted to form correct ideas they will form fantastic and mistaken ones, and these first ideas are the most lasting, and difficult to uproot. It saves a world of trouble to the child itself, as well as to the future teacher of the child, if the home teaching be intelligent.

But this involves preparedness in the mother, or whoever has the bringing up of the child; and it is unfortunately true that many of us are not in a position to enlighten the child because we are unobservant ourselves: we take things too much for granted, and do not comprehend that there is a "why" and a "wherefore" for everything. In this respect the child's instinct is truer than our own.

Supposing we really cannot answer the child's questionings, the most straightforward course is to say at once, "I really do not know," and the wisest course is to immediately add, "But we will try to find it out together." Children have a respect for so candid an acknowledgment, and it gives zest to the lesson if mother is a learner too. Nothing is gained by a peremptory silencing or a careless putting-off to veil our own ignorance.

BETHA FARR.

A MOTHER'S NOTES ON DRESS AND DRESSMAKING.

PLAIN dress skirts are now a thing of the past. Not only is the skirt trimmed at the extreme edge, but as many as five rows of trimming are seen on some skirts, each about six inches apart, and frequently of different widths, the top one being the narrowest. Braid, both plain and fancy, is very much used this season for trimming. It is not very expensive, and wears well. Flounces and ruches are also very fashionable. Double and even treble skirts are becoming more and more popular.

Fig. 27.

Very few dress bodices are made to reach below the waist, notwithstanding this is a very trying fashion for stout figures.

No doubt our readers have noted the great change in colours worn this season—the pretty neutral art tints, which we have all become familiar with, are being supplanted by much brighter shades of green, violet, and what was formerly called magenta. At present they seem too showy to take the fancy of very many, but we shall probably get used to them, and adopt them in the course of time. Still, bright colours are usually somewhat expensive, and those we have mentioned are apt to fade.

Fig. 27. This is a pretty style of dress for cotton or woollen material. If woollen stuff be used, dark blue cheviot with white trimmings ornamented with rows of blue braid would make a stylish dress, though the white would soon soil. Velvet or a fancy material could take the place of this, and would wear better. For a cotton dress, embroidery might be employed as trimming. The fitting lining for the dress bodice fastens down the centre, while the material hooks over on the left side under the pleated strap. The upper edge of the bodice is set into a stand up collar, while the lower edge is gathered slightly into the waistband. Long pleated straps border the front trimming—these are made of a straight piece of stuff laid in three pleats, coming one over the other, caught into the neck opening, and tacked to the bodice; they are put loose over the waistband, and only joined to the full basque, which is composed of a gathered strip of stuff eight inches deep, set on under the waistband. The loose puffed sleeve is finished with a tight cuff. The skirt is lined throughout with alpaca.

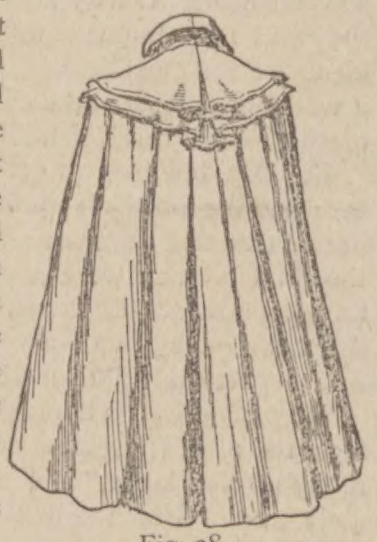


Fig. 28.

Fig. 28. Here we show a lady's three-quarter circular mantle. A mantle of last year's shape made on a yoke could be renovated by trimming it with one or two shoulder capes or frills of silk, and a collar of the same, as seen in this illustration. Capes are certainly more convenient to wear over the large dress sleeves now fashionable, unless the jacket sleeve could be made to button on the outside, as our grandmothers wore them in 1830, but Dame Fashion has not yet revived this commodious style.

Fig. 29.

Fig. 29. Of late years we have all learnt the convenience and economy of having a blouse bodice for summer wear. Our illustration shows a pattern with a pleated front and side frills of the same material. Cotton, delaine, or pongée silk can be used. The body is made over a fitting lining which reaches to the waist, and fastens down the centre under the pleated front. The frill gets gradually narrower to the waist, and is taken to a point in the centre of the back. The sleeve finishes with a narrow heading, above which it has three rows of gathers. A turned-down collar is cooler for the summer weather, but a stand-up one can be used if preferred.

Fig. 30. This is a very suitable pattern for a little girl's washing-dress. The skirt and bodice are cut in one, and the gathered yoke-piece is cut wide enough to leave a frill four inches deep. The straight widths of stuff are pleated on to the lining and gathered at the waist. The yoke-piece is gathered ten times, and drawn up so as to fit the lining. The neck is bound with a bias strip of material, or a narrow heading could be left, when the yoke must be cut an inch wider. The full sleeve finishes with a cuff gathered several times, leaving a frill about an inch wide. Gathers are very easily kept in place during washing and ironing if each row is stitched firmly to the lining.

Flat patterns can be supplied. Figs. 27, 28, 29, and 30, 6½d. each. Address, "M. C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, E.C.

Fig. 30.